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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, this is going to be really short this week!! When I left my job just over a year ago, I was hoping that I'd either find something right away, or enjoy some really quality "retirement" time. Well, nothing panned out on the job front - at least anything that I thought that I would enjoy doing (a self-imposed requisite). The free time this past year was enjoyable. I managed to have some time to really work out in the yard and get things done that I never really had the time to do previously. And, I was also able to do a few things inside the house. To top it all off, I was successful in getting out to the golf course to play - much more than I have over the past who-knows-how-many years!

But, to really stay retired these days, one's financial stability still needs to be maintained. And as I'm sure that you're all aware, it's not easy living off of one income these days. So, unless I was going to start to collect my pension ten years early (and a 50% cut), I knew that I was going to have to find something to bring some extra cash into the household.

With the nice weather approaching, I really didn't want to take on a full time, Monday through Friday job. I still wanted to get out in the yard, plus play some golf. I started working this week. Now, not only was there the possibility of making my wife a "golf widow" by playing a "lot" of golf, but I've now insured that possibility because I'm working at the golf course! I never thought of being a groundskeeper although I've been around them for a long time, playing golf. I don't know how I even considered thinking about it, not to mention even looking into the possibility, but I did. So now rather than worrying about hitting an errant golf shot and beaning someone on a tractor in the fairway, I'm now looking over my shoulder to make sure I'm out of the range of golfers!

So this column isn't short because of the lack of ideas to write about, but because I'm sore and tired. Not being too active over the winter has resulted in a lot of reduced muscle tone. Doing some "strenuous" work and exercise without any type of preparation does a job on the old muscles! So, while I try to work out the kinks and get rid of some of these minor aches and pains, I'll leave you all to the rest of this week's issue!

Until next time...

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TeraDesk 3.90 Released

Version 3.90 of TeraDesk open-source desktop for the 16-bit and 32-bit lines of Atari computers is available at:

<http://solair.eunet.yu/~vdjole/teradesk.htm>

New features in this release are related to:

- Capability to set font effects (bold, italic...) in the font selector;
- Capability to recognize and handle (on suitable filesystems) executable files having names without extensions;
- Increased ranges of desktop or window background colours and patterns;
- Improved name-pattern matching, including the capabilities to specify exclusion name masks, and to use in single-TOS some wildcard options that, in previous versions, were available only in Mint/Magic.

Also, some noncritical bugs were fixed and a number of optimizations were made, so that, in spite of the added features, program size has shrunk to slightly smaller than in any of the the previous three releases.

See the history file for more information.

Have fun.

Djordje

CDLab 0.91 Released

CDLab 0.91 is available.

<http://doyeuxyvan.free.fr/cdlab/v0.91/CDLAB091.ZIP>
A CD-R burning tool for Atari-compatible computers.

New features

- New audio formats for audio extraction. (AU/SND, AIFF, AIFF Cubase Audio).
- Filenames mask for audio extraction.
- Interface improvement in Monochrome.

Main features

- Audio track extraction.
- CD-RW blanking function.
- DAO (Disc-At-Once) copy for any single-session discs. (But it doesn't work with my MMC compliant drive)

- TAO (Track-At-Once) multisession mode.

You need the SCSIDRV interface. (already included in HDDriver)

You can also run this program before CDLab.

<http://doyeuxyvan.free.fr/scsidrv/SCSIDRV.PRG>

CDLab is now released under terms of the GNU General Public License.

The source code can be retrieved here:

<http://doyeuxyvan.free.fr/cdlab/v0.91/>

Original Francois GALEA website:

<http://fgalea.free.fr/cdlab/>

Yvan Doyeux

CAFCRACK v1 (M) Crack For Cubase Audio Falcon 2.06

Minor update with the complete Cubase Audio 2.06 package including CAFCRACK. Outputs of mixermapping objects are switched to 'DSP'. It affects *.MIX and DEF.ALL files. You can now enjoy a more easier work with the built-in DSP effects!

More than ten years after Steinberg's withdrawal from the Atari Market, here is a new crack called CAFCRACK for Cubase Audio Falcon 2.06.

Of course with this crack, you needn't the 128 bits key dongle plugged on your Falcon. (OKI japan M7H007-024 SYNS0 E 3432351)

This crack is better than other existing Cubase Audio cracks on Atari. This cute hack is the result of months of tough research.

Attention was turned to Cubase stability and data integrity which were the lack of the other previous cracks.

You must understand that it's impossible to know if this crack is perfect. If you encounter any bugs you can report them on Atari newsgroups or forums.

There are only 2 drawbacks (I think they are minor):

- Cubase takes up more memory (+25%).
- Each part or track data needs twice more memory size (192 bytes instead of 96) but no influence on MIDI events.

But one thing is sure: this is the BEST crack ever made for Cubase Audio Falcon!

You must put in the same folder CAFCRACK.PRG and CAF_206.PRG of your current Cubase folder. CAF_206.PRG needs to be unpacked. If you are using the cubase score editor, you must put a specific patched SCORES35.MOD file in the MODULES folder. Be sure that the files attributes are not in read-only mode. Data is written in SCORES35.MOD for each cubase launch with CAFCRACK.

You will find in CAFCRACK.ZIP:

- Unpacked CAF_206.PRG
- Patched SCORES35.MOD
- CAFCRACK.PRG
- CAFCRACK.TXT

<http://jeanpatatari.site.voila.fr/cafcrack/v1/CAFCRACK.ZIP>
<http://jeanpatatari.site.voila.fr/cafcrack/v1/CAF206JM.ZIP>

Jean Pat

Atari-Users of the World Map

Hi Gang,

I added a new section to Atari-Users.Net today. It's a google map for Atari-Users, aka a frapper map.

The map interface requires a modern browser (I think it's Javascript based)

Log on and add your self to our Atari Map!

While logged in, zoom in on your location then select the "add" button on the right side.

Thanks for adding your location!!

Rob

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho, friends and neighbors. Well, again this week, there aren't enough messages in the newsgroup to make a good column, so we're going to just sit here and chat for a while, okay?

Those of you who read this column frequently probably remember that I keep in pretty close touch with my family. We all live within 10 miles of one another. Most of the group gets together on Sunday mornings at my parents' house.

Oh, one or two will miss one week, and a couple of others will miss the next, but by and large I can count on seeing most of my siblings (I have 6) just about every week.

My parents, both now retired, try to keep active. My mother cooks and bakes constantly. There's always homemade cookies or bread or pizza or something to be had.

My father contents himself with coin and stamp collecting, and his collection of classic car models, and reading the newspapers and AARP magazine.

One of my clearest memories of my father when I was growing up was his penny-pinching when it came to spending money on energy. Being the bread-winner of the family, he made sure that not a cent's worth of electricity or fuel oil was wasted.

When we were growing up, you could only take a 3 minute shower, you HAD to close the refrigerator door while you were pouring that glass of milk, and Gawd help you if you left a room without turning out the light.

His favorite complaint, however was about leaving a window or door open on a cold day. My clearest memory, even to this day, of my father's voice is his yelling, "Close that damned door... you're letting the heat out!"

So I wasn't at all surprised when I showed up at my parents' house last Sunday to find my father holding a newspaper up, opened to an inside page and folded in half, with the headline "HUMANS RESPONSIBLE FOR GLOBAL WARMING" shouting at me.

With a look of triumph in his eyes he yelled, "Y'see? I TOLD you that you were letting the heat out, dammit!"

Have a good week, one and all. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Sony 'Goat' Ad Sparks Outrage!
***** Microsoft Xbox 360 Goes Elite!
Atari Plans Huge Layoff!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Microsoft's Xbox 360 Goes Elite

The Xbox 360 has gone Elite, as Microsoft launched yesterday the high-end version of its video game console. With a larger storage capacity, a sleek matte-black look and a high-definition video port, the Xbox 360 Elite will retail for \$479.

Although the price tag is about \$80 more than the Pro version of the Xbox

360, it is still slightly less expensive than the lower-end model of Sony's PlayStation 3 (PS3). Both are substantially more than Nintendo's popular Wii.

The Elite includes a high-definition multimedia interface (HDMI), component video cables and the Xbox Live headset, as well as a wireless game controller. The HDMI connection is a single cable which combines both high-definition video and digital audio output. Both the headset and the controller come in Elite black.

The Elite's detachable 120GB hard drive, six times larger than previous 360 drives and twice the size of the PS3's, is available for sale separately to owners of existing Xbox systems.

The larger hard drive on the Xbox 360 Elite and some of its other "premium accessories" are designed for gamers who seem to have an "insatiable appetite for digital high-definition content," according to the Microsoft announcement.

To date, the Xbox has sold more than 10 million units worldwide. It was the first of the "next generation" videogame consoles to hit the shelves, in the fall of 2005. As with other videogame consoles, though, it is not only a game machine. A digital camera, music player or flash card reader can be plugged into a USB port. And, with free software downloads such as Microsoft's Windows Media Player 11, Zune software or Windows Media Connect installed on a Windows XP or Vista PC, the Xbox can stream music or video, or display photos, from the computer.

Some initial reviews of the Elite have expressed disappointment over whether the machine delivers more than current models. They note that the WiFi adapter and HD DVD must still be purchased separately.

But Michael Gartenberg, an analyst with Jupiter Research, said features are "always a balance" against costs. "Wireless can easily be added on," he noted, "and HD DVD is still available if consumers want it."

In general, he said he found the Elite to be "a nice evolution for the console. It adds HDMI and a larger hard drive," which supports the console's growing profile as a hub for entertainment beyond games. "If you look at the whole Xbox line," he said, "it's laid out pretty well, from low to high."

Gartenberg said he didn't think that users who already owned an Xbox would upgrade to this model, but that it might be chosen by someone looking to buy their first Xbox.

Sony 'Goat' Ad Sparks Outrage

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. has launched an internal inquiry following an event in Athens last month that featured a decapitated goat and topless models to promote its new game "God of War II."

The game carries a "mature" rating and is intended for those at least 17 years or older because of its "blood and gore," "intense violence" and "nudity," according to Sony's Web site. It recently launched in various European countries.

The event was held last month but has come to light now because photos of it are being published in the June issue of the "Official PlayStation Magazine" in the U.K. The Daily Mail newspaper published one of the photos on its Web site Sunday, featuring a scantily clad woman and a man dressed as a cave man standing over the dead goat.

Sony has decided to halt distribution of the magazine to remove the two-page section from 80,000 copies that were due to hit newsstands in the U.K. on Tuesday, according to a spokesman at the magazine's publisher, Future PLC. Removing the section is "quite a task," the spokesman said. About 2,000 copies of the magazine have already been mailed to subscribers, however.

Animal welfare groups were quick to condemn the incident. "Causing unnecessary suffering to an animal for fun is completely unacceptable," a spokeswoman for the International Fund for Animal Welfare said on Monday.

Sony in the U.K. acknowledged that "an element of the event was of an unsuitable nature" but played down its gruesomeness. The goat was supplied by a butcher and the event, organized by a Greek production company, was intended to be based on Greek mythology, the company said in a statement.

Guests were not "invited to reach inside the goat's still-warm carcass to eat offal from its stomach," as the Mail had reported, the company said. Rather, they were offered bowls of food intended to represent the goat's intestines, it said.

The controversy is unlikely to win Sony much favor from those opposed to violent video games, although some gamers seemed bored by the brouhaha.

"Anyway, the game is really good," one reader from Sweden wrote on the Daily Mail's Web site.

"At the end of the day, we eat meat every day of our lives, why don't we complain about that?" added a reader named Tom from England. "You can bet money on it some of them are slaughtered in inhuman ways anyway."

Kostas Farkonas, a freelance journalist who covers the gaming industry in Greece, said he did not attend the "God of War II" but had heard about it.

"It was a bit extreme, sure," Farkonas said. "But in all the years of covering gaming, we've seen worse."

Atari Announces Significant Staff Layoffs

Long time industry publisher Atari is set to move ahead with substantial layoffs in the near future, cutting its workforce by a total of 20 percent, including an estimated 26 percent of its administration staff.

The layoffs, which will be finalised by the end of July, comes after the departure of Atari's former CEO Bruno Bonnell from his positions at parent company Infrogrames early last month, and his replacement by Patrick Leleu. The company's redundancy plan in relation to laid off staff was approved on April 10, and is expected to cost Atari between US\$800,000 and \$1.1 million in restructuring charges.

Atari's CEO and president David Pierce hopes that this restructuring will

help alleviate the company's ongoing financial problems, commenting, "We expect that today's reorganization will continue to reduce Atari's general and administrative cost. These actions, though difficult, are a significant first step in reorganizing Atari and demonstrate our commitment to restoring shareholder value."

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

12 Nations Put on Copyright Piracy List

The Bush administration on Monday targeted China, Russia and 10 other nations for extra scrutiny in the piracy of American movies, music, computer programs and other copyrighted materials.

The 12 nations were put on a "priority watch list" in the area of copyright piracy, which costs the American industry billions of dollars in lost sales annually.

"We must defend ideas, inventions and creativity from rip-off artists and thieves," U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab said in a statement accompanying this year's report.

The administration earlier this month announced that it was filing two new trade cases against China before the World Trade Organization. One of those cases charged that China was lax in enforcing its laws on protecting American copyrights and patents.

The annual report, known as a "Special 301 Report," for the section of U.S. trade law that it covers, said that China has a special stake in upgrading its protection of intellectual property rights, given that its companies will be threatened by rampant copyright piracy as they increase their own innovation.

For Russia, the report said the United States will be closely watching to see how Russia fulfills the commitments it made to upgrading copyright protection as part of a U.S.-Russia accord reached last year which was seen as a key milestone in Russia's efforts to join the World Trade Organization.

In addition to Russia and China, the 10 countries placed on the priority watch list were Argentina, Chile, Egypt, India, Israel, Lebanon, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela.

In elevating Thailand to the priority watch list, the administration said it was concerned by a range of issues including what an administration statement called a "deteriorating protection for patents and copyrights."

Top Court Rules for Microsoft on Patent

The Supreme Court on Monday overturned a ruling that Microsoft Corp. should be held liable for patent infringement on copies of the Windows operating system sold overseas.

By a 7-1 vote, the justices rejected arguments by AT&T Inc. that Microsoft software code that infringes on its patents could be deemed a "component" of a computer, making overseas sales of the Windows operating system an infringement under U.S. patent law.

The Microsoft-AT&T dispute is one of a series of important patent cases that the court has agreed to hear in the last year. It hinges on a provision of U.S. patent law that holds products sold overseas can be held liable for infringement if they include a U.S.-supplied "infringing component."

A U.S. appeals court upheld a lower court decision that, under that provision, Microsoft was liable for infringing an AT&T patent for converting speech into computer code in copies of Windows sold overseas.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit said the world's largest software maker was liable for the unauthorized distribution of codec technology, used to compress speech signals into data, in copies of Windows overseas.

But the Supreme Court's majority opinion, written by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, reversed the appeals court's ruling.

The U.S. Justice Department has sided with much of Microsoft's argument and said the appeals court ruling "improperly extends United States patent law to foreign markets" and puts U.S. software companies at a competitive disadvantage.

Only Justice John Paul Stevens dissented from the court's ruling.

Spammers Use New Technique to Evade Filters

Spammers have stepped up efforts to use encrypted attachments to evade filtering systems, service provider Email Systems has reported.

The technique relies on the fact that many spam systems can't scan inside emails containing encrypted or password-protected attachment, and work out that they are not legitimate. Without a rule to block such attachments, most systems will pass on the email to recipients, handing spammers an important victory in the battle to get spam through.

In recent weeks, Email Systems detected a small but steady stream of such spam emanating from bot-compromised hosts, containing a zipped-up version of the pervasive 'Storm' bot-loading Trojan that plagued Internet users in January.

Recipients would have been able to inadvertently unzip the Trojan using an embedded password, after being attracted by a number of eye-catching subject lines, including 'Worm Detected!', 'Virus Detected!', 'Spyware Alert!' and 'Warning!'

Although the technique has been around for some months, spammers appear to be stepping up their attempts to use it, said Greg Miller of Email Systems. The company had quarantined hundreds of thousands of copies of attachment spam, up from levels a tenth this volume some months ago.

"We have moved on from spam being just a guy sending out huge amounts of spam," said Miller. The vast bulk of spam was now automated via bots, and this made finding new infection methods even more critical to the spam economy. "Every six months or so we see a new attack that is very successful," he said.

As anti-spam systems adapted to popular techniques such as image spam, criminals were having to look further to engineer spam stealthiness.

The easiest means of detecting the current encrypted file attacks would be the attachment's filesize, 77KB, but this could be varied in future attacks quite easily. The best approach was simply to disallow encrypted emails to pass through the system at all.

Yahoo's New Ad Campaign Plays to Users' Needs

Yahoo, the Web brand that's a distant No. 2 behind Google in search market share and search ad revenue, will try to click better with consumers with a new message: Be a better - (whatever you want to be).

"We'll let our customers fill in the blank," says Allen Olivo, vice president, global brand marketing. The idea? "Whatever they want to be, Yahoo's tools and services allows them to be better."

In the case of Yahoo, its search engine needs to be a better money engine. Yahoo's first-quarter ad revenue was \$1.6 billion, less than half of Google's \$3.8 billion in the same period. Yahoo's share of search requests in the quarter remained flat at about 28%, while Google's rose slightly to 48%, according to Internet tracker ComScore.

Yahoo will blast the campaign all over the Web - on Yahoo-related and other sites - and use traditional media outlets as well, including prime-time TV, radio and print. The offbeat ads promote two of its latest services: Yahoo oneSearch mobile search service introduced in January and Yahoo Answers, introduced a year ago. The services are designed to make Yahoo more competitive not only with Google but also with other popular sites, such as Wikipedia.

One TV ad, for instance, shows how Yahoo can help two friends be better explorers.

In the first part of the ad, a hiker is eaten alive by a red flower that is not identified in their guidebook.

In the second part of the ad, one hiker is equipped with Yahoo's mobile oneSearch, and he learns that the flower is a "crimson man-eater" and a "potent herbal enhancer" that causes the first hiker's hair to grow great lengths.

Some of the marketing will try to demonstrate Yahoo services. The TV ad, for instance, will be available online where users can click on their

favorite clips and create a new commercial.

Yahoo hopes that the marketing attracts more users to draw in more advertisers. "If from a brand-marketing standpoint we are creating more value and more choice for our users, we are also creating a more engaged audience for our advertisers," Olivo says.

But will more ad spending bring in more ad revenue? Yahoo hopes so. It traditionally spends a lot more on advertising and marketing than its bigger rival in the race for ad dollars. Last year Yahoo outspent Google by 72%, \$353 million in advertising vs. Google's \$205 million, according to TNS Media Intelligence.

"More engaged consumers also tend to have more interest and give more permission to be introduced to our next generation of products such as Yahoo oneSearch," says Nick Chavez, senior director of brand advertising. "And through word of mouth they are more likely to share their experience with those products."

Mozilla Releases eBay Add-On for Firefox

Mozilla Corp. is asking users to test a new add-on for the Firefox browser that lets users monitor their deals on eBay Inc.'s auction site in real time.

Add-ons are small programs designed to provide supplemental functions to Firefox. The gadgets have proved to be one of the browser's most popular features.

The beta test program for the so-called Firefox eBay Companion is only open to users in the U.K., Germany and France, but will eventually be opened up to the U.S. and other countries, according to a Mozilla spokeswoman.

The eBay add-on is a sidebar that synchronizes with the eBay auction and e-commerce site, and displays alerts as items are sold or change status. It also has an integrated search tool. For security, it uses Firefox's antiphishing technology and eBay's Account Guard feature, which also detects spoof Web sites.

No more features will be added, although the add-on could be improved as feedback is received, the spokeswoman said. The final release will come by August, she said.

Google: Privacy vs. Open Government

As Google CEO Eric Schmidt has repeatedly said, the goal of his company is nothing less than to index all of the world's information and make it available to anyone with an Internet connection. It is a lofty, even visionary goal that already has begun reshaping how we look at (and look up) information.

But as George Orwell might have said, had he written "Server Farm," not all information is created equal. In its relentless, Borg-like pursuit of

information, Google is increasingly handling and indexing vast quantities of personal information that all too easily can be used to commit identity theft and other modern data crimes.

The announcement this week that Google has struck deals with four states to assist them in providing more effective searches for public records and other online state information has only heightened those concerns.

At the Center for Digital Democracy, founder and CEO Jeff Chester has been tracking the privacy implications of Google's growth. "My concern about all of this," Chester said, "is that to the extent that Google can match up public records with other user data that goes into advertising targeting programs, that's a problem."

Chester said that as more and more data is bundled together, companies such as Google will be able to create "very sophisticated and dangerous marketing schemes."

"Google has the ambition to create and release the most powerful advertising tools ever," Chester declared. "As the state Web site search program expands, Google will know every public action you've done - weddings, divorces, house purchases and sales, bankruptcies, etc. Google likely will become your personal cradle-to-grave data mining company."

In Chester's opinion, what is needed are stronger privacy laws in the United States that require a company such as Google to get an individual's permission before indexing his or her personal information, even if that information is contained in a state database.

Over at OpenTheGovernment.org, Director Patrice McDermott had a slightly different take on the issue. "As long as the software that is provided to the states and the data that comes out of it," McDermott said, "is open, nonproprietary, the government owns the search results, and they are readily available to the public, we think it's terrific."

McDermott said that her chief concern is the possibility that Google would exert some type of proprietary control over the results generated by searches of the "deep Web" lurking in state sites.

"That's not what I understand that Google is trying to do with site-mapping," McDermott acknowledged. "They may be doing that in other areas, but not in this respect."

When asked if Google's open-state initiative would encourage to Congress to be more open about aspects of its operation, such as Senator holds on legislation or the origin of funding earmarks, McDermott laughed. "Will Google influence Congress to be more open? One would hope," she said. "One will be disappointed, but one would hope."

The Floppy Rises Again

We all thought that the floppy disk had joined punched cards in the IT graveyard. But Lindy Electronics has used a USB port to resurrect this traditional device.

Long left behind by USB thumb drives in capacity, Lindy's USB-connected floppy drive can read and write 1.44MB floppies. Data is transferred at

12Mbit/s; that is a faster per-second transfer rate than the floppy diskette's capacity. It is bus-powered and there is no need for an additional power supply.

Barry Edmonds, Imation's UK MD, says that floppy disks are still being purchased for use in the education sector. Their manufacture by Imation has not yet ceased.

Stephen Fawcett, Lindy Electronics' senior product manager, said: "We know that customers are using 3.5-inch floppies, because we are still seeing a demand for them." It's an obvious way of retrieving data from a legacy device and there are situations where a floppy drive can be useful: "Even those of us who prefer pen drives and the like, have probably found ourselves presented with a floppy of "important data" and wished we still had an easy way to access it. So our USB floppy drive can be a useful tool."

Once upon a time, over a quarter of a century ago, floppy diskettes stored a computer's operating system-- DOS was, originally a floppy disk operating system. Nowadays you would need more than a thousand floppies to store Windows XP or Vista.

Lindy's USB floppy, compatible with Windows (98SE, ME, 2000, XP, Vista), Linux and Mac OS 8.6 and above, is priced at US\$60 and available now.

Windows Live Hotmail to Debut Monday

Microsoft Corporation on Monday will finally bring its completely revamped version of its popular online e-mail service out of beta and into full release.

According to sources familiar with the company's plans, Microsoft has been quietly rolling out version 1 of Windows Live Hotmail in smaller international markets such as Belgium and the Netherlands to test the new system. Monday's rollout give U.S. users and the other estimated 250 million Hotmail subscribers around the world access to the application, sources said.

Microsoft Thursday declined to comment through its public relations agency.

It's been a long road for the revamped online hosted e-mail application. Microsoft has been testing its new e-mail service, rewritten from scratch, since August 2005. The company rebranded it to Windows Live under Microsoft's new hosted services plan in November 2005. That strategy, introduced by Microsoft Chief Software Architect Ray Ozzie, is aimed at making Microsoft's existing and new hosted online services more attractive to users and advertisers so the company can catch up to competitors such as Google.

Microsoft named the service Windows Live Hotmail in February in order to retain the name by which users know it. Richard Sim, a Microsoft senior product manager, outlined the reasons for keeping the Hotmail brand on the Windows Live Hotmail team's Live Spaces blog when the name change was announced.

"Many users were extremely loyal to the Hotmail brand and perceived the

[Windows Live Mail] beta as an upgrade to Hotmail," he wrote at the time. "In fact, our most loyal users have been very happy with Hotmail for years and while they loved the improvements in the beta, some were a bit confused by (the) name change."

The LiveSide blog, which tracks Windows Live services, also has been charting the progress of Windows Live Hotmail on a page dedicated to the new service.

Microsoft focused on improvements in speed and efficiency of the mail service, and also made it more powerful so it could potentially be used by businesses; it's the mail service in Microsoft's small-business hosted service, Office Live.

Windows Live Hotmail offers users 2G bytes of mail storage, and also allows them to import contacts from and also export them to other Web-based e-mail services, such as Google's Gmail and Yahoo's Yahoo Mail. There also is a premium Windows Live Hotmail Plus Service for about \$20 a year that will offer 4GB of inbox storage and other expanded options.

Microsoft also revamped the mail service's user interface, and made sorting through and searching for contacts and messages more efficient and faster, according to the company.

More information about Windows Live Hotmail and its latest beta version can be found on the Windows Live services home page.

IBM Bores Tiny Holes in Computer Chips

Computer chips, it seems, work better if they're more like Swiss cheese than American cheese.

Chips with minuscule holes in them can run faster or use less energy, IBM Corp. said in announcing Thursday a novel way to create them - potentially one of the most significant advances in chip manufacturing in years.

To create these tiny holes, the computer company has harnessed a plastic-like material that spontaneously forms into a sieve-like structure. The holes have a width of 20 nanometers, or billionths of a meter, placing the method in the much-vaunted field of nanotechnology.

"To our knowledge, this is the first time anyone has used nanoscale self-assembled materials to build things that machines aren't capable of doing," said John Kelly, IBM's vice president of development.

Kelly said molecules in the material fall into a defined pattern similar to how snowflakes form into symmetrical six-sided shapes.

IBM said the technology could be added to existing manufacturing lines and applied to current chips, boosting performance by 35 percent or cutting power consumption by the same percentage.

It expects to start using the technique in 2009, first on chips used in IBM's servers and later to chips it makes for other companies, including possibly the Cell processor used in Sony Corp.'s PlayStation 3.

"It's a tremendous breakthrough," said Richard Doherty, research director

at Envisioneering Group, an analysis firm. "It's likely to save energy and increase chip speeds more than any other single advance in the last few years."

The holes alleviate a problem that has loomed for the semiconductor industry: As chips have shrunk in size, boosting their speed and efficiency, they've increasingly become susceptible to electricity leaking between their closely spaced wires through the intervening insulator, usually glass.

The most advanced chip technology in large-scale commercial use, which uses circuits 65 nanometers apart, loses almost half of its power to leakage, Doherty said. The leakage not only wastes power but also slows down the processor.

Ideally, the glass would be replaced with vacuum, a better insulator, but removing the glass away in the right places hasn't been possible with current techniques. If the glass was simply etched away, the resulting "ditches" running along the wires would simply be filled in by the next layer of insulating glass applied, according to IBM Fellow Dan Edelstein, chief scientist on the project.

IBM's polymer technique sidesteps that problem. First, the self-assembling material is applied on top of the glass, forming the tiny holes. The chip is then exposed to a gas that seeps through the material as if it were a stencil, etching away the underlying glass to form small holes in the top surface, and larger, continuous gaps between the wires.

Another layer of glass is applied in a vacuum chamber. Because the holes in the topmost existing glass layer are small, the newly applied layer of glass doesn't seep into the underlying cavities. Instead, it seals them off, with a vacuum inside.

The technique was invented at IBM's Almaden Research Center in San Jose, Calif., and the T.J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown, N.Y. It was adapted for commercial use by the University at Albany and IBM's Semiconductor Research and Development Center in East Fishkill, N.Y.

Mac Native OpenOffice Gets Shot in the Arm from Sun

OpenOffice is a multiplatform suite of office productivity applications that already runs on the Mac using X11, the windowing system designed to work with Unix applications. Now it looks like work is accelerating on a Mac-native version of OpenOffice that won't require X11 at all.

In his blog on the GullFOSS Web site, Philip Lohmann, project lead for the Graphic System Layer Project, reports that Sun engineering has added its support to the effort to bring forth a Mac-native version of OpenOffice.

Lohmann admits it's been a long time coming.

"The MacOSX porting history is basically as old as OpenOffice.org itself. Practically from the start there was the plan to have a native version for Mac, however as a first step the community decided to produce an X11 port which - since OOo already had several X11 ports from the start - seemed to be a good way to get a version quickly as temporary solution,"

he writes.

Lohmann said he and fellow Sun developer Herbert Dürr will work on the Mac-native OpenOffice release, and he expects that other Sun developers will join in as help is needed.

"Some may ask: Why is Sun joining the Mac porting project? If you look around at conferences and airport lounges, you will notice that more and more people are using Apple notebooks these days. Apple has a significant market share in the desktop space. We are supporting this port because of the interest and activity of the community wanting this port," wrote Lohmann.

OpenOffice is designed to be an open-source, free alternative to Microsoft Office and other office productivity suites. It includes a word processor called Writer, presentation software called Impress, an equation and formula editor called Math, a graphics application called Draw, a spreadsheet application called Calc and Base, a database based on the HSQL engine.

Net Radio Stations Applaud Congressional Bill

A coalition of Net radio stations hailed the introduction on Thursday of Congressional legislation that could reverse a potentially mortal, recent decision by the Copyright Royalty Board (CRB).

The SaveNetRadio coalition applauded The Internet Radio Equality Act, filed by Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Don Manzullo (R-Ill.) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Act would "vacate the CRB's March 2 decision and apply the same royalty rate-setting standard to commercial Internet radio, as well as satellite radio, cable radio and jukeboxes," said a statement on Rep. Inslee's Web site. "A transition rate of 7.5 percent of revenue would be set through 2010."

The March 2 ruling by the Board increases royalty fees that Web radio stations pay, which the bill's sponsors said amounts to 300 percent for larger stations and 1200 percent for smaller ones. On April 16, the CRB upheld its earlier decision and refused webcasters' request to stay implementation of the new royalty rates until legal appeals were conducted.

SaveNetRadio's Jake Ward said that, since the decision, "millions of Internet radio listeners, webcasters and artists have called on Congress to take action. Today Congress took notice, and we thank Mr. Inslee for leading the charge to save music diversity on the Internet."

The bill also provides for a webcaster to choose an alternative rate structure, if they wish, of 0.33 cents per hour of sound recordings, per listener. Public radio broadcasters would be required to submit a report to Congress on how to pay for their noncommercial use of music over the Net.

In a statement, Inslee said that "you can't put an economic chokehold on this emerging force of democracy. There has to be a business model that allows creative webcasters to thrive and the existing rule removes all the oxygen from this space."

The decision by the CRB had been opposed by small Webcasters, NPR, Clear Channel Communications and others. Under the new rules decided by CRB, webcasters would pay \$0.0008 per song per user, retroactive to 2006, and it would increase to \$0.0019 cents per song per user by 2010.

SoundExchange, the nonprofit organization that collects royalties on behalf of the rights holders, had brought the matter to the CRB. "The idea that this bill would help small webcasters or artists is ludicrous since less than 2 percent of all royalty payments in 2006 came from small webcasters," said John Simson, Executive Director of SoundExchange, in a statement. "The true beneficiaries are the mega-multiplex services like AOL, Yahoo!, Microsoft and Clear Channel, which will benefit from rates substantially lower than those set by the Librarian of Congress in 2002."

The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists had applauded the CRB's decision, saying its members "deserve to be paid fairly," while the National Association of Broadcasters said the CRB's decision was "disappointing" and would "dramatically raise fees for companies that stream music over the Internet."

A previous set of agreements had expired at the end of 2005. Under those agreements, small Internet radio stations paid 12 percent of revenues, rather than the per-song, per-listener fee required by the new rules.

One small Net radio station, SomaFM in San Francisco, said that it had paid about \$22,000 in royalties in 2006, but that, under the new ruling, it would have to pay about \$600,000 annually. It said its total annual revenue, from listener contributions, was about \$200,000.

How The Internet Took Over

Twenty-five years ago the Internet as we now know it was in the process of being birthed by the National Science Foundation. Since then it's been an information explosion. From e-mail to eBay, communication and shopping have forever changed.

1. World Wide Web

Tim Berners-Lee created user-friendly "Web pages" that could travel over the Internet, a network built to shuttle research between universities. The world logged on: 747 million adults in January.

2. E-mail

Tech's answer to the Pony Express. Programs such as 1988's Eudora made it easy to use. In-boxes have been filling up ever since. Nearly 97 billion e-mails are sent each day.

3. Graphical user interface (GUI)

Most computer displays were blinking lines of text until Apple featured clickable icons and other graphic tools in its 1984 Mac. Microsoft's Windows took GUI - pronounced "gooey" - to the masses.

4. AOL

AOL turned people on to Web portals, chat rooms and instant messaging.

Early subscribers paid by the hour. AOL once boasted 35 million subscribers. It bought Time Warner for \$106 billion in 2001.

5. Broadband

The answer to the drip-drip-drip of dial-up, high-speed Internet service fuels online entertainment. About 78 percent of home Internet users in the U.S. have broadband, up from less than 1 percent in 1998.

6. Google

So popular it's a verb. The search powerhouse, with a market capitalization of nearly \$149 billion, perfected how we find info on the Web. Google sites had nearly 500 million visitors in December.

7. Mosaic/Netscape

Created by Marc Andreessen and others, Mosaic was the first widely-used multimedia Web browser. Spin-off Netscape Navigator ruled the '90s until Microsoft's Internet Explorer took off around '98.

8. eBay

Thanks to eBay, we can all now buy and sell almost anything (skip the body parts). eBay has 230 million customers worldwide who engage in 100 million auctions at any given time.

9. Amazon.com

Jeff Bezos' baby began as an always-in-stock book seller. It survived the tech bubble and now is the definitive big box online store. It was the second most-visited online retailer in December, after eBay.

10. Wi-fi

Have coffee shop, will compute: Wireless fidelity lets us lug our laptops out of the office and connect to the Net on the fly. More than 200 million Wi-Fi equipped products sold last year.

11. Instant Messaging

LOL! Web surfers began to "laugh out loud" and BRB ("be right back") in the mid-'90s, with the launch of ICQ and AOL Instant Messenger. Millions use it to swap messages and photos, even telephone pals.

12. Yahoo!

Stanford University graduate students Jerry Yang and David Filo created this popular Web portal in 1994. It remains a favorite for email, photo sharing (it owns Flickr) and other services.

13. Compuserve/Prodigy

In the 1980s, they became the first mainstream companies to offer consumer Internet access. CompuServe was more for the geek set; Prodigy was more for the masses.

14. The Well

The precursor for social networking, the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link,

founded in 1985, was the original (now longest-running) virtual community. It gained popularity for its forums.

15. Vices

Regulators scrapped plans for a .xxx domain, but vice remains one of the Net's biggest businesses. Online gambling, illegal in the U.S., topped \$12 billion last year; online porn was \$2.84 billion. Searches for "Paris Hilton video" return about a million hits.

16. Spam/Spyware

Unsolicited e-mail, and software that watches your Web habits, mushroomed from annoyance to menace. Junk e-mail now accounts for more than 9 of every 10 messages sent over the Internet.

17. Flash

Adobe's Flash player is on 98 percent of all computers. Seen a video on YouTube or MySpace? Then you've probably used Flash. It animated the Web, spawning zillions of online cartoons and videos.

18. Online mapping tools

MapQuest started saving marriages in 1996 by offering turn-by-turn directions. Followers such as Yahoo and Google beam directions to cellphones and offer satellite images of neighborhoods.

19. Napster

Created in Shawn Fanning's dorm room, Napster let more than 26 million people tap into a free database of music. Record companies shut it down. In its wake emerged legitimate download sites, such as Apple's iTunes.

20. YouTube

The video-sharing site, bought by Google in 2006 for \$1.65 billion, ignited a user-generated revolution online and introduced millions to the delights of Stephen Colbert, Chad Vader and Lonelygirl15.

21. The Drudge Report

Matt Drudge's news site helped break the Monica Lewinsky story in 1998, paving the way for politically-minded bloggers everywhere. He claims to have about 500 million visitors a month.

22. Bloggers

The more than 75 million Web logs have changed how the world gets its news. Bloggers have challenged the traditional media, lobbied for and against wars, started debates, and posted far too many pictures of their pets.

23. Craigslist

Craig Newmark's gathering place for (mostly) free classified ads changed the way we find apartments, cars and dates. The site relies on users who supply friendly neighborhood information -- about 14 million ads a month.

24. MySpace

This online hangout has replaced the mall as a home away from home for teenagers. The site has more than 173 million personalized pages. News Corp paid \$580 million for it in 2005.

25. Gaming and virtual worlds

More than 19 million globally pay to explore three-dimensional Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) games such as World of Warcraft and virtual communities such as Second Life, which let players do business or just hang out. Both use the easy connections fostered by the Web to build communities.

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